

INFORMATION FROM DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH REGARDING HAND HYGIENE AND THE USE OF FACE MASKS DURING COVID-19 EPIDEMIC

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most effective method of protecting the service user, their visitors / relatives and staff from infection.

Hand Washing

Removes dirt, organic matter and most micro-organisms acquired through direct contact with a person and from the environment. Liquid soap and warm water is adequate for this procedure.

Alcohol Based Handrub

With a minimum of 60% alcohol content offers an alternative to hand washing in **most** situations.

Alcohol Based Hand Rub is **not** seen to be a more effective method of hand decontamination than handwashing using liquid soap and water.

Alcohol based hand rubs are **not** effective in removing dirt or soiling and must **only** be used on visibly clean skin.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

If neither the care worker nor the individual receiving care and support is symptomatic, then no different measures should be introduced in the use of PPE other than the usual good hygiene practices.

Fluid Repellent Surgical Masks

Face masks should not be routinely worn while staff are providing care for service users with no symptoms of COVID-19. There is no benefit to wearing a mask in these cases and no good evidence that this practice will reduce transmission rates.

Therefore the use of face masks should be limited to where staff are providing care for service users with either possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

Advice For Staff Conducting Home Visits

Where staff are conducting home visits to service users. They should telephone the service user prior to visiting to establish if the service user or a member of their household has symptoms of COVID-19. If so and following a risk assessment it is deemed that the visit should go ahead, the staff member should contact their line manager who will provide them with appropriate PPE to ensure safe practice and minimise the risk of transmission of the virus.

N.B. This guidance has been developed in line with the current government advice which is based on sound scientific evidence. It is very important that all staff adhere to these principles.